



PUBLIC PROTECTION CABINET Kentucky Horse Racing Commission

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For Immediate Release

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KHRC Approves Recommendation to Allow Walking Horse Participation in Kentucky Horse Breeders' Incentive Fund *Votes to recommend changes in fund program*

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Sept. 8, 2009) – The Kentucky Horse Racing Commission (KHRC) voted today to approve the previously deferred Kentucky Walking Horse Breeders' Incentive Fund (KWH-BIF) application based on recommendations presented by the KHRC Rules Committee.

The KWH-BIF was deferred at the Feb. 10, 2009 Commission meeting due to concerns over inadequate regulation and reporting of Horse Protection Act (HPA) violations, specifically the act of soring. The HPA, a federal law established in 1970, is regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA trains and certifies the Horse Industry Organizations (HIO) and Walking Horse Shows will hire HIOs to enforce and uphold the HPA. The Commission noted in February the lack of enforcement at Walking Horse Shows when the USDA is not present and deferred the application back to the Rules Committee for further review.

The KHRC Rules Committee completed a full investigation of the KWH-BIF policies and procedures, Kentucky Walking Horse Industry Organization (KY-HIO) as well as other USDA-certified HIOs and Walking Horse Show management. Numerous discussions were held with KWH-BIF, American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and industry officials.

"As reform of the walking horse industry continues, the KHRC's recommendations put the horse first," said David L. Foley, AAEP executive director. "We believe these recommendations will help ensure humane treatment."

Essentially, the recommendations will allow the Walking Horse members to participate in the incentive fund as well as reassure the Commission the Walking Horse shows are adequately regulated. Crucial to the recommendations is the list of approved HIOs. Any Walking Horse show in Kentucky that affiliates with one of the approved HIOs will be permitted to offer breeder incentive funds. This includes the Horse Protection Commission, the National Walking Horse Association, and Friends of Sound Horses. Additionally, the recommendations necessitate the need to escrow the 2009 funding and apply the 2009 funds to the 2010 show season.

“The safety and welfare of the horse is of great importance to the Commission and I applaud the Rules Committee for their complete investigation and subsequent recommendations,” said Lisa E. Underwood, executive director of the KHRC.

A full copy of the recommendations can be found on the KHRC website www.khrc.ky.gov or by contacting the KHRC office at 859.246.2847.